A Marshall Cavendish Publication 48 In Fortnightly

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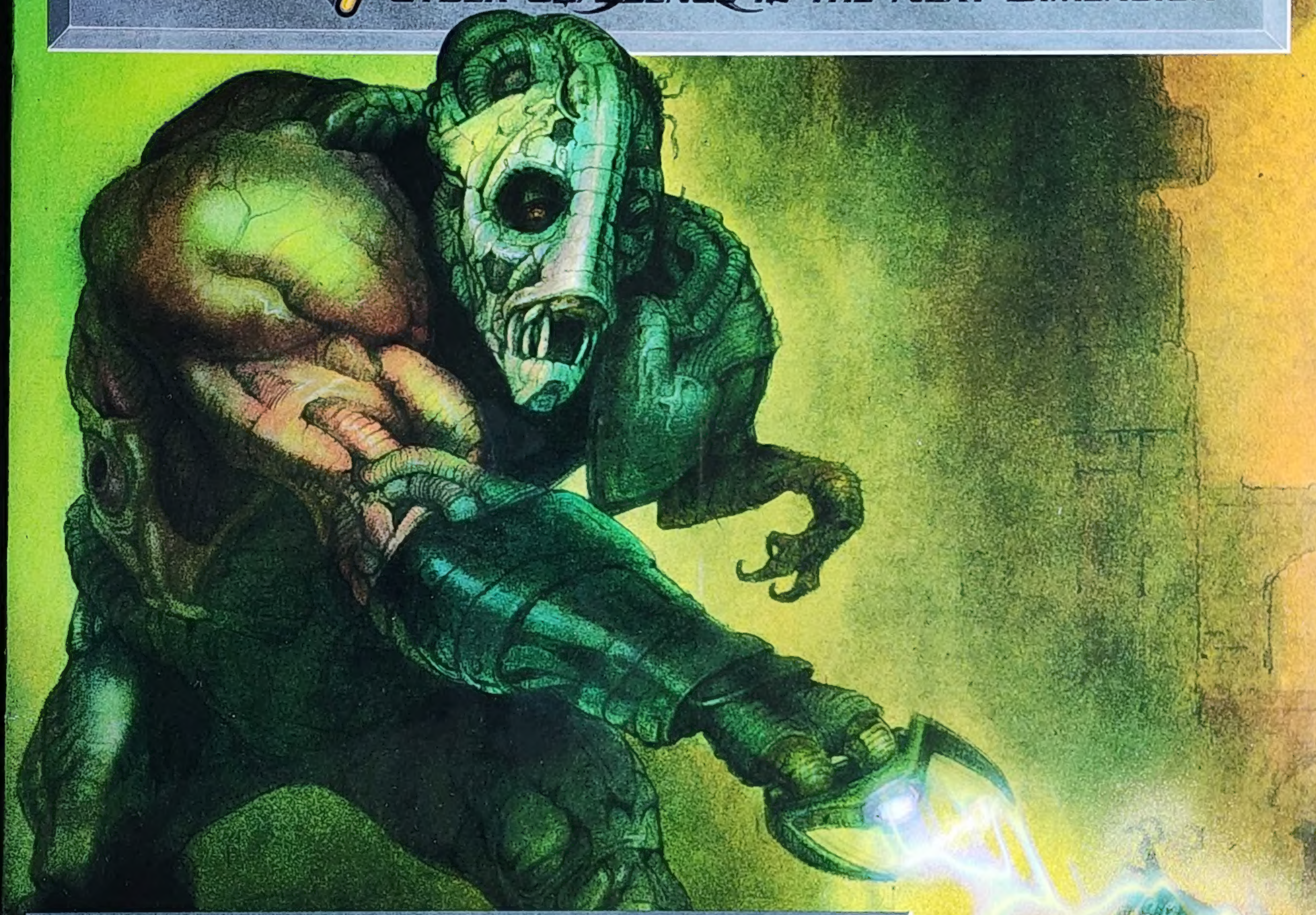
The Ancestral Trail

Cyber Challenge in the Next Dimension



48 Pixar, Particle Blaster

Evil revenge in the city of the lost

Jules Heller

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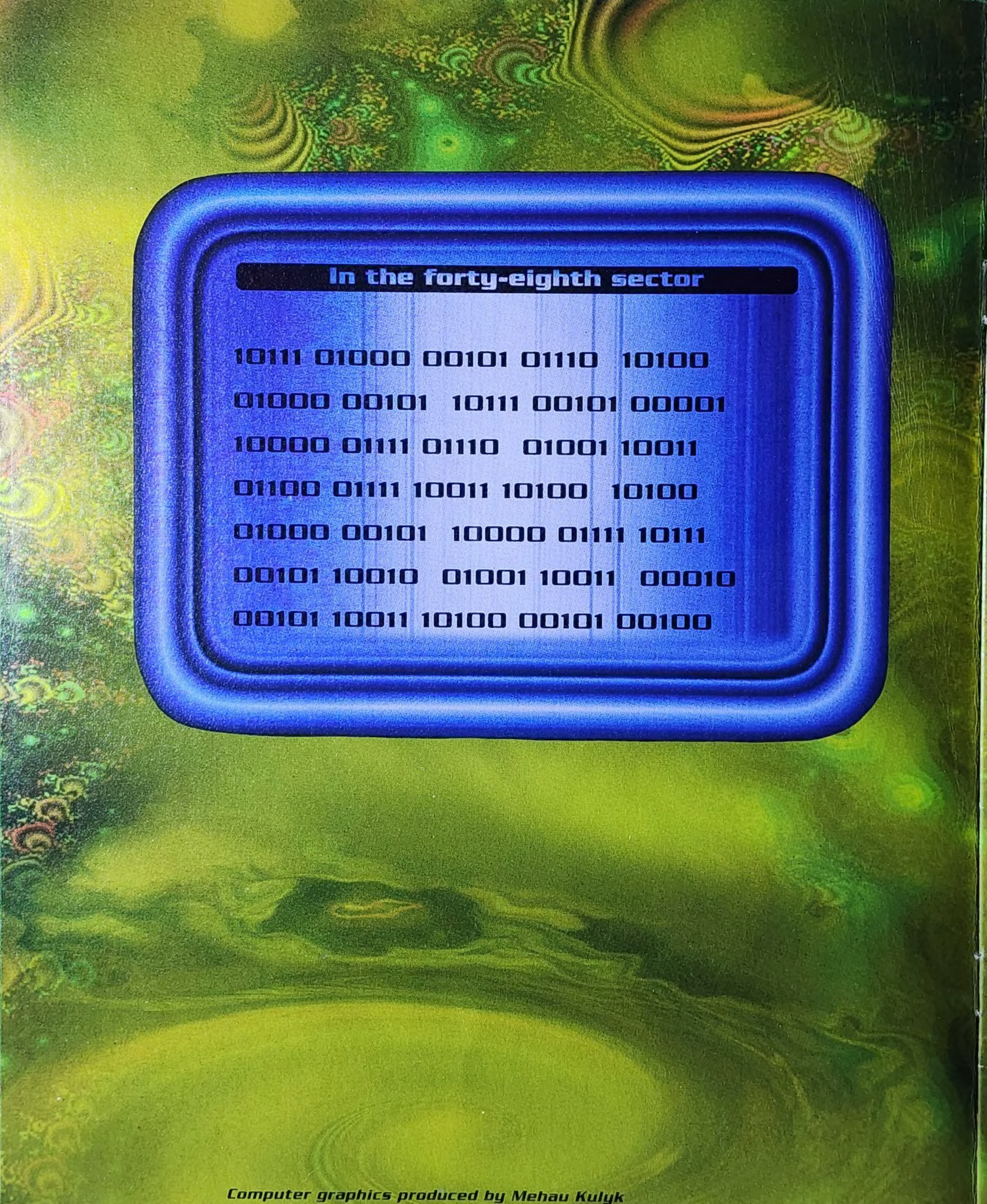


Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

Shadows stretched over the scarred and bedraggled blanket of scorched earth that was once the domain of Mandelbiot. The fractal controller's evil world was destroyed; reduced to smoking ashes because of a question the vile creature could find no answer to.

High above the smouldering landscape, Richard steered the cyber cruiser steadily away from the scene of devastation. With directions given to him by Robo, he aimed the craft towards the location of the next worm hole. Richard knew there was a prize waiting to be collected if he and his two companions could survive the journey through the giant airless void that waited ominously for them in the dusky skies.

"One more Omni piece," he told himself, "and it's all over."

"All over..." Teeza chirped from his position at the back of the craft.

Richard watched as the worm hole crept closer into view and began to grow bigger.

On two other occasions he had sampled the dubious pleasure of a trip through such an object. He was not looking forward to another taste of dimensional travel. As the cruiser entered the great hole in time, Richard closed his eyes and tried to imagine he was somewhere else.

Fantastic journey

The flying machine trembled as it was swallowed by the gigantic tunnel in space. Richard felt a familiar sick feeling rise up in his stomach. Then, in a flash, the journey was over. He looked up in relief to see that they had made it to the other side of the worm hole.

"I hope that's the last time we have to go through one of those things," Richard said.

Robo's shrill voice gave him an answer: "That was final worm hole we will encounter," he announced.

A grateful smile came to Richard's lips.

There was no surprise on his face when Richard saw that his unpleasant journey had transported him to yet another strange land. The view that stretched out before him was in stark contrast to the dismal solitude of Mandlebiot's fractal world.

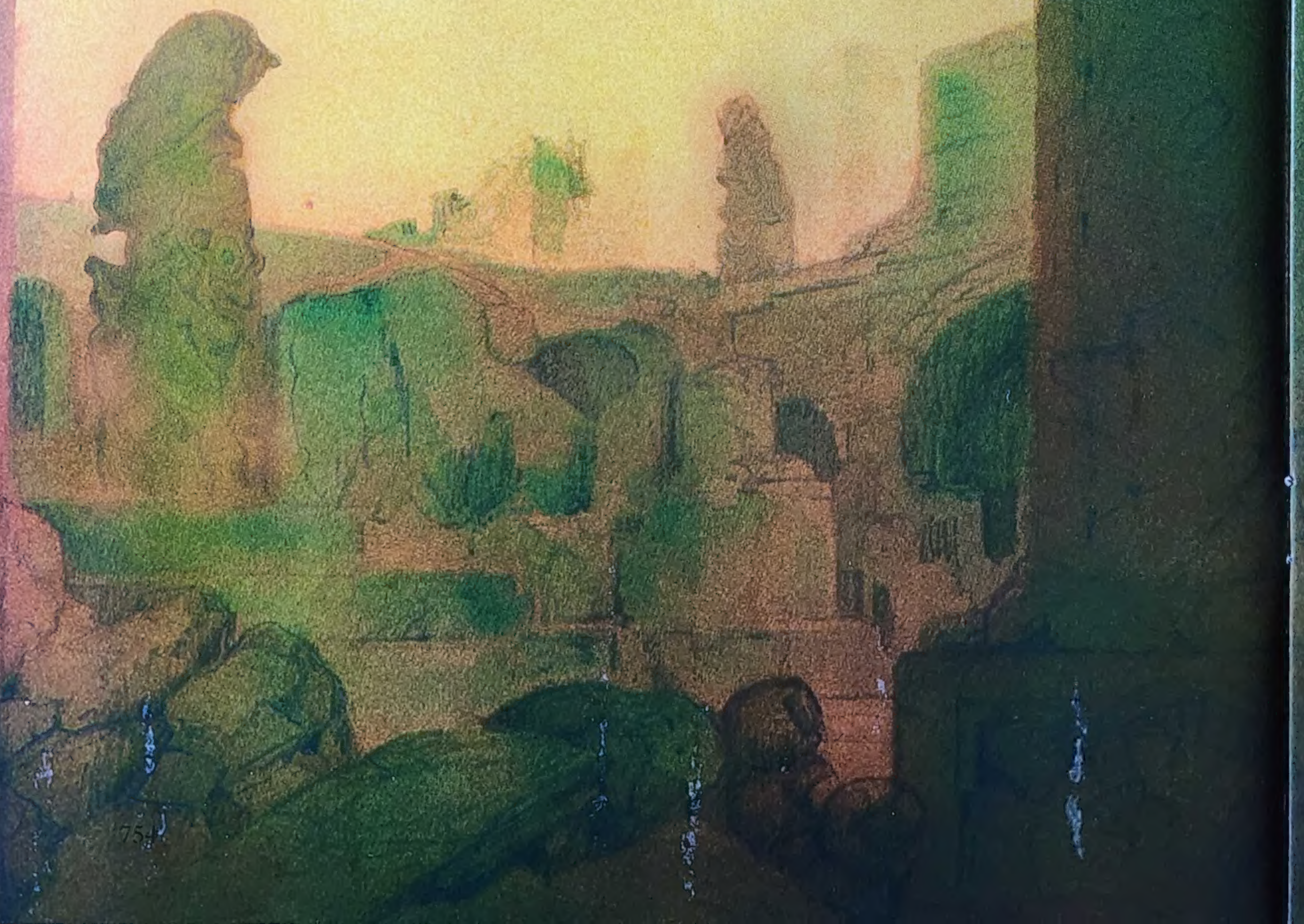
Richard cleared his throat. "It looks like there's some kind of city below us," he proclaimed.

City of the Dead

The cyber cruiser moved onwards and Richard was able to get a clearer look at the scene below. The ragtag collection of buildings contained in the city was obviously very old. Even from his position in the skies, Richard could see they were in a considerable state of disrepair.

With a dull thud, the machine gently came to rest on the ground. Closely followed by Teeza and Robo, Richard stepped outside to explore. They had landed close to the dusty remains of a huge palace. Elaborately decorated stone archways stood as crumbling reminders of a golden age. The magnificent solitude made Richard feel sad. However, his attention was soon diverted elsewhere.

From within the ruins came the sound of something moving. Richard drew his sword and prepared to defend himself.



A shape slowly began to emerge from a dark corner of the ruined palace. Like a giant baby learning to take its first steps, the object moved stiffly into view. As Richard's eyes widened with alarm, he could hear the sound of stone rubbing against stone. Whatever the creature was, it was big.

"Robo!" Richard called out. "What is this thing?"

The familiar sound of the robot's sensors echoed through the ruins. "Organism is mutant creation of Evil One. Rock-based, it is known as Goffall."

At that moment, the newcomer stepped out of the shadows.

Richard was able to get a clear view of it for the first time. With knees trembling, he stared in awe at the frightening vision that towered over him.

Monstrous vision

"It looks like an animal, but it's made from stone!" Richard exclaimed, still clutching his sword. "I think we'd better get out of here!"

Limbs creaking, the creature rose to its full height and ground its teeth. There was little doubt in Richard's mind that this beast had only one function: to fight. Every part of its mighty frame was covered in an array of armour plating and deadly spikes. At the tip of a vicious looking snout, a large stone horn pointed forwards, aimed towards its prey.

Without warning, Goffall opened its inhuman mouth and emitted an ear-splitting bellow of rage. Like an angry rhinoceros, it began to paw the ground with its front claw.

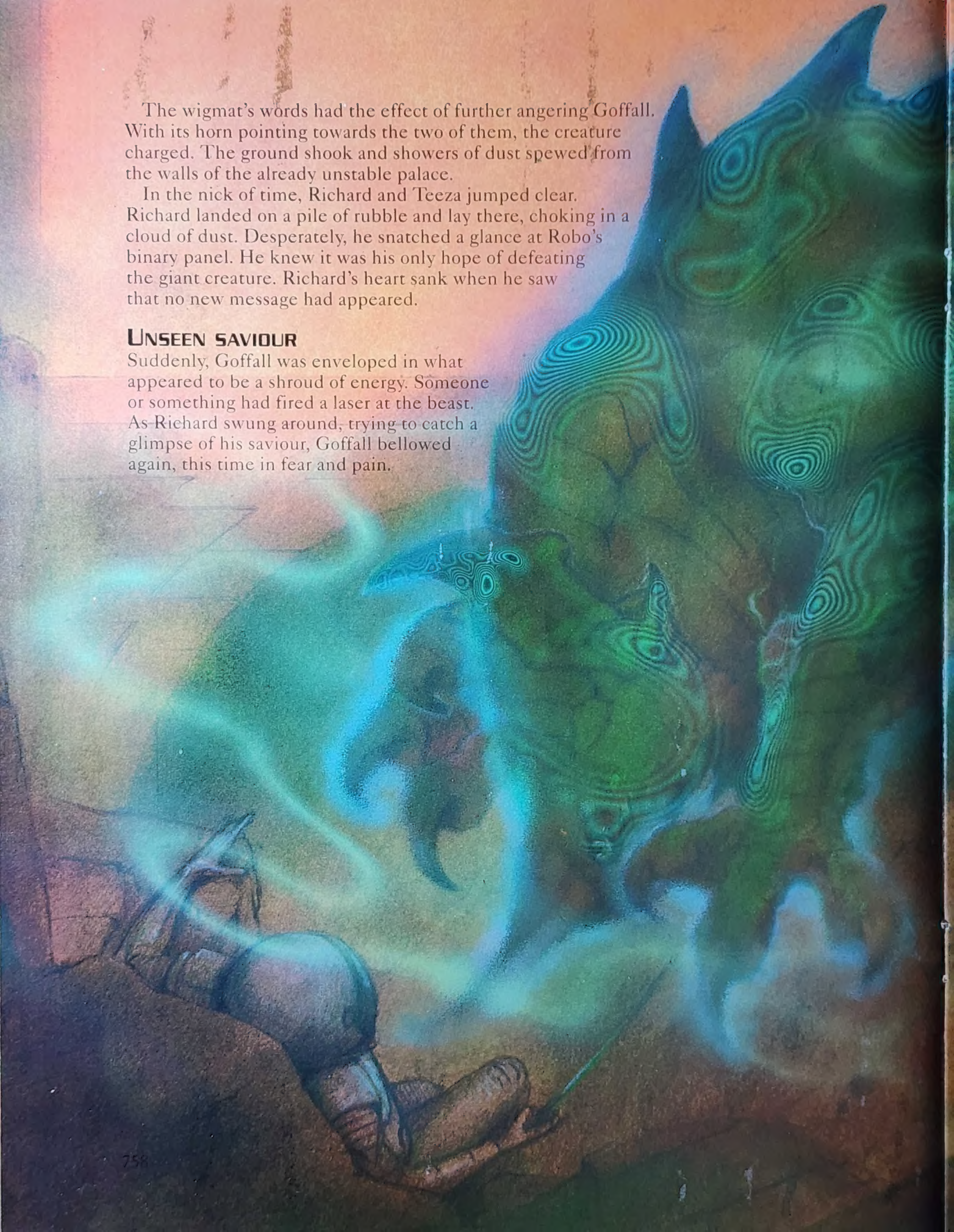
"Super badvibe!" Teeza said, shakily hiding behind Richard.

The wigmat's words had the effect of further angering Goffall. With its horn pointing towards the two of them, the creature charged. The ground shook and showers of dust spewed from the walls of the already unstable palace.

In the nick of time, Richard and Teeza jumped clear. Richard landed on a pile of rubble and lay there, choking in a cloud of dust. Desperately, he snatched a glance at Robo's binary panel. He knew it was his only hope of defeating the giant creature. Richard's heart sank when he saw that no new message had appeared.

Unseen saviour

Suddenly, Goffall was enveloped in what appeared to be a shroud of energy. Someone or something had fired a laser at the beast. As Richard swung around, trying to catch a glimpse of his saviour, Goffall bellowed again, this time in fear and pain.



Wave upon wave of bright blue energy danced and swirled around the beast. Richard watched entranced as the brute began to break up, crumbling into thousands of tiny pieces. After a short while, all that remained of the gigantic monster was dust.

Once again, Richard felt himself consumed with confusion. He stared blankly at Robo. He did not need to speak. Robo anticipated his question.

"Goffall has been pixillated," the robot casually announced.

"What do you mean, 'pixillated'?" Richard asked.

"Goffall organism has been reduced to microscopic particles."

"By whom?" Richard gasped.

New danger

Before Richard's robotic companion could answer, the walls of the ruined palace began to shake. The ground on which Richard was standing started to tremble as if caught in an earthquake.

"Let's get out of here before the building collapses!" Richard cried.

The three companions ran towards the exit. There was a collective sigh of relief when they emerged into the daylight.

However, their ordeal was only just beginning. "Wait!" an evil, high-pitched voice commanded.

Although every fibre of his being urged him not to, Richard could not stop himself from turning to face the source of the inhuman voice. There was something in its timbre that was irresistible.

"Oh no!" he groaned when his eyes came to rest on the owner of the voice. "I think we're in trouble!"

The power of Pixar

Standing a few feet away from Richard was a creature even more terrifying than Goffall. It was humanoid in appearance, with a bony face that provided an unearthly setting for a pair of deep-set eyes which sparkled with malice. Its torso was lined with hard muscle. In its right hand it carried a strangely shaped object, which Richard assumed must be some sort of weapon.

Once again, Robo's dry tones could be heard: "Creature is Pixar, general in Evil One's army. Extreme caution is advised when dealing with him."

Richard cleared his throat and gathered his thoughts before speaking. "What do you want?" he demanded.

Pixar began to laugh. It was a sound that set Richard's teeth on edge. "There is only one answer to that question," the creature scoffed. "I want you!"

Teeza's shrill voice broke in on the conversation. "Badvibe," he exclaimed.

Pixar turned his attention from Richard to the wigmat, his haggard face contorted with anger. "Silence, vermin!" he ordered, pointing the object he was holding at the little animal.

As Richard looked on in horror, a stream of pure light gushed from the weapon, bathing the squirming wigmat in a dazzling glow. Moments later, Teeza was gone. Like Goffall, he had been pixillated. Richard trembled with fear.

Now it was Richard's turn to face Pixar. With a mischievous grin, the creature turned towards him and prepared to pixillate his helpless foe.

"Robo, what is that thing he's firing?" Richard yelled. "It looks like some kind of laser gun!"

Deadly weapon

"Incorrect," said the robot. "Pixar's weapon is called bipix. It is used to pixillate living organisms."

As the robot spoke, Richard was relieved to see that a new message had finally appeared on Robo's binary panel. To have any hope of defeating this latest adversary, Richard knew that the message had to be urgently decoded. However, with Pixar bearing down on him, there was little opportunity for him to do so.

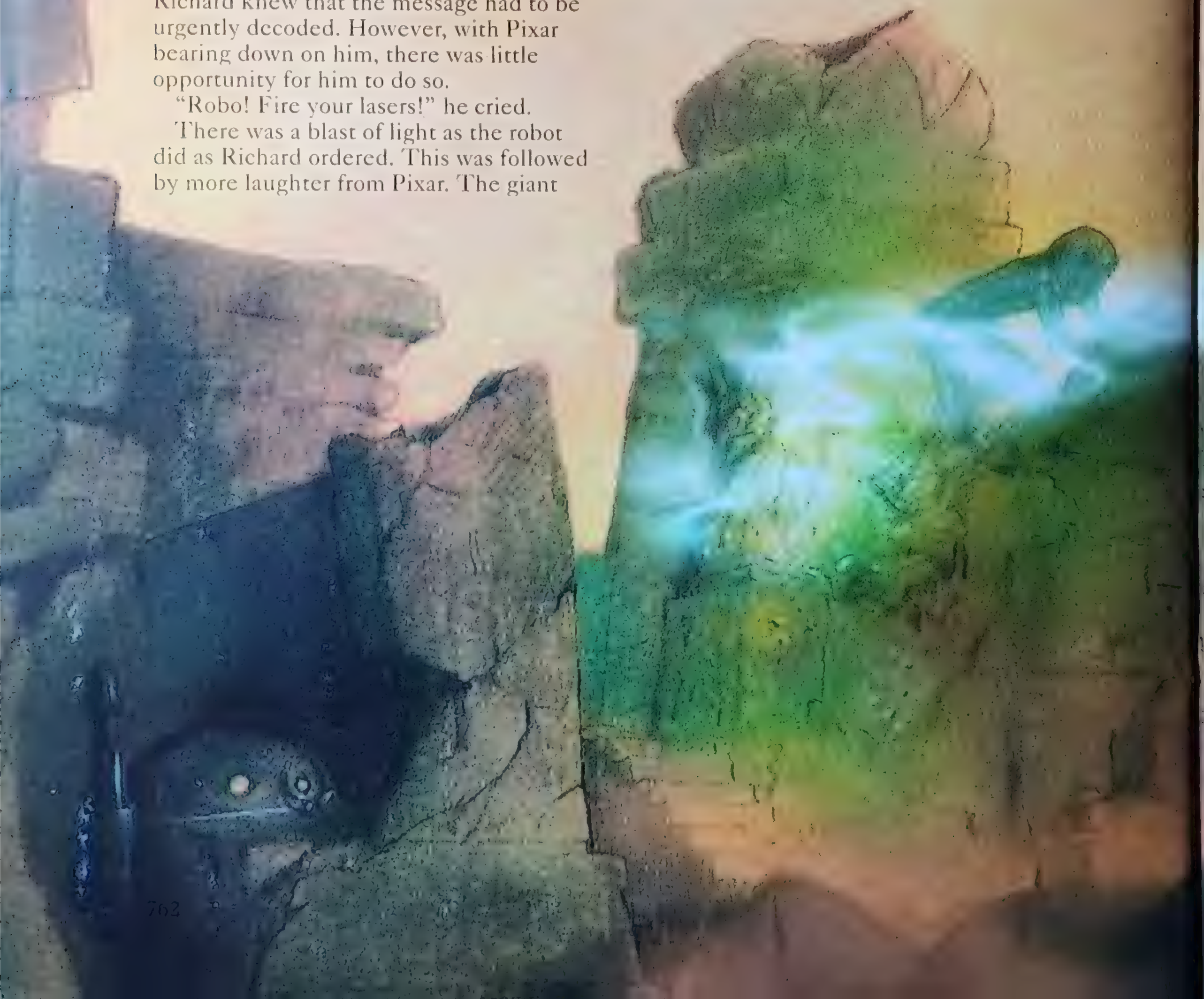
"Robo! Fire your lasers!" he cried.

There was a blast of light as the robot did as Richard ordered. This was followed by more laughter from Pixar. The giant creature was obviously unimpressed by Robo's firepower.

"Pathetic!" Pixar scowled. "Who do you think you are dealing with? It will take more than that machine's paltry weaponry to harm my majestic being!"

The smile on Pixar's face widened as he aimed the bipix towards Robo's squat form. "Let's see what you're made of," he said as he sent another beam of intense light towards the robot.

Pixar had underestimated Robo. Richard's companion may have possessed only a fraction of Pixar's power, but his reflexes were good enough to ensure that he managed to avoid the deadly bipix ray.



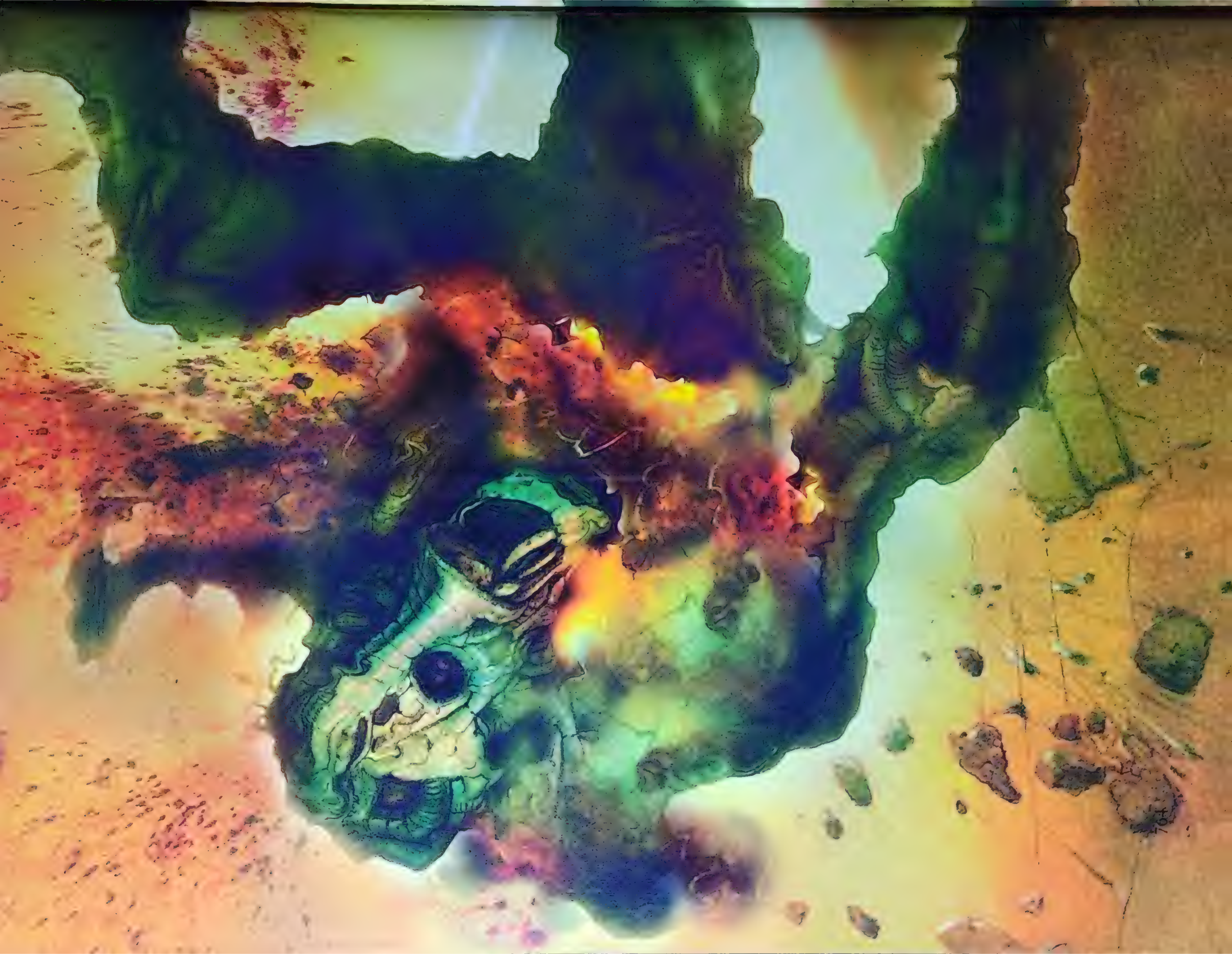
Another burst of energy from the weapon also came to nothing. Enraged, Pixar fired off several more quick blasts. In the meantime, Richard had been busily concentrating on the binary message. With a cry of triumph he finally finished decoding it.

"Robo! Fire at the bipix – it's the only way Pixar can be defeated!" he shouted.

The sound of Richard's voice was enough to remind Pixar that his chief target was the boy, not the robot. He turned his attention once more to Richard.

"Chosen One," he spat out in rage, "those are the last words you will ever speak!"

With that, the enormous brute aimed his weapon at Richard and fired.



Richard immediately felt faint. He looked down at his body and saw it was bathed in the same blue light that had been responsible for the deaths of Goffall and Teeza. Was this the end for him too?

It was Pixar's turn to give a cry of triumph. "At last!" he rejoiced. "The Chosen One is finished. My master will be pleased – his reign will go on forever!"

As Richard began to fade away, Pixar danced with joy.

Robo's revenge

Then, without warning, Pixar paused. A look of horror spread across his face as he realized he was no longer holding the bipix.

"No," he said simply, turning to look at Robo. "What have you done to me?"

"I have fired my laser and knocked the bipix from your grip," came the robot's deadpan response.

"You're not supposed to do that!" Pixar said with a pathetic note of sadness in his voice. Even as he spoke, he began to disintegrate. His heavily-muscled torso seemed to catch fire. Robo fired two more bursts of laser at the creature and plumes of smoke belched from Pixar's body. There was a great crash as the monster tumbled over on to his side.

Meanwhile, Richard started to return to normal. He was no longer fading away. The power of the bipix was finished.

As Pixar was consumed by fire, Richard was surprised to hear a familiar voice.

"Nicecool – I'm back," it said.

"Teeza," Richard joyfully exclaimed. "I thought you were finished!"

Richard climbed to his feet and rushed over to thank Robo. As he did so, Teeza moved to where the bipix lay on the ground and gave it a cursory sniff. He liked how it smelt.

The excitement was not over yet. Once more, the buildings in the city began to tremble alarmingly. "I don't understand!" Richard cried. "I thought that Pixar was dead!" Then he realized what was happening. The city was not falling to pieces – in fact quite the opposite was occurring.

Richard looked on in wonder as the dusty remains of the dead city began to transform themselves. Shards of broken stonework magically melted away to be replaced by sparkling, pristine buildings of unsurpassed splendour. Crumbling towers evaporated like mist, leaving grandiose replacements that pointed proudly at the skies. It was like erosion in reverse.

Former glories

"This is amazing!" Richard gasped.

"Now that Pixar is dead, city is rebuilding itself," Robo pronounced.

In only a short time, the three comrades found themselves standing within the walls of a totally restored city. However, they were so entranced by the spectacle that they failed to notice they were no longer the city's only inhabitants.

"Welcome, Chosen One," said a voice from behind them.

"Who are you?" Richard asked, turning to face the figure.

"I am Elitper. Ruler of the city of Liberos."

Richard looked long and hard at the newcomer. He was a curious creature. He seemed to be part man, part reptile.

"I am in your debt," said the stranger. "Your robot has brought me back to life and saved my city. I am your servant."

"How did we save you?"

"You killed Pixar – he has held our city under his evil grip since the dawn of time. Now, your quest is almost over."

As Elitper spoke, he was joined by other creatures. All had one thing in common: the look of gratitude in their eyes.

"The Evil One knows he is in danger," Elitper continued. "Whilst he lives, you cannot trust anybody. He is the supreme master of the Cyber Dimension."

Richard looked at the great man-reptile. There was a burning question on his lips: "I am told there is an Omni piece somewhere near this city," he said. "Can you tell me how to find it?"

THE DARK CRUISERS

"I assume that you talk of the Star of Light," Elitper said softly. "The location of this object is sacred. I am not allowed to tell you where to find it. However, I can let you know that you are very close to your goal."

"Go on."

"Find your cyber cruiser and fly north. You will know the Star of Light when you see it. That is my final word."

After further discussion, Richard and the others bade farewell to their new friends, who led them through the outskirts of the city to where the cruiser awaited them.

There was a feeling of strength in Richard's body as they took to the skies. The last Omni piece was so close he could almost smell it.

They flew on without talking until the land below them began to undergo another change. The skies filled with mist and the air grew thicker.

It was Teeza who eventually broke the silence. "Cyber cruisers!" he said abruptly.

"What did you say?" Richard responded.

"Cyber cruisers – many."

"Silence!" Robo said scornfully.

"No – he's right!" Richard cried out. "Take a look behind you."

The three companions swivelled their heads and stared out of the craft's rear view screen. The little wigmat had indeed been correct. Following closely behind them was a horde of dark-coloured cruisers. They did not look at all friendly.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

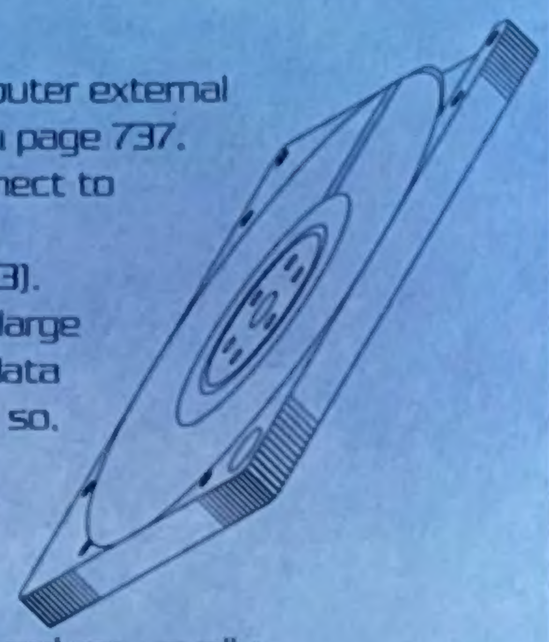
Shoomi and Shoobi are still following Richard and his friends through the Cyber Dimension. Study the illustrations in this issue and see if you can spot them.

In issue 47 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 744.

▶ Computer Challenge

Hidden somewhere in this issue is a vitally important computer component from the sinister Cyber Dimension. Use your visual skills to help Richard and his friends Robo and Teeza locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?



In the last issue a computer external hard disk was hidden on page 737. External hard disks connect to computers via the SCSI connection (see issue 33). They are used to store large amounts of computer data in digital form. By doing so, valuable space can be saved on the computer user's own hard drive. External hard disks come in different sizes and are usually able to store up to 270 megabytes.

▶ More Cyber Power card games to play

Here are some more exciting games for you to play with your **Cyber Power** cards:

Megapower Players choose and discard cards until they have three with the same *Gigatron Powers* total. You will find the rules in issue 11.

Fighting Forces In this game for two, one player throws down a card and challenges the other to "Fight!" by topping the card's value. Substitute your Joker for the Pod card. The rules are in issue 20.

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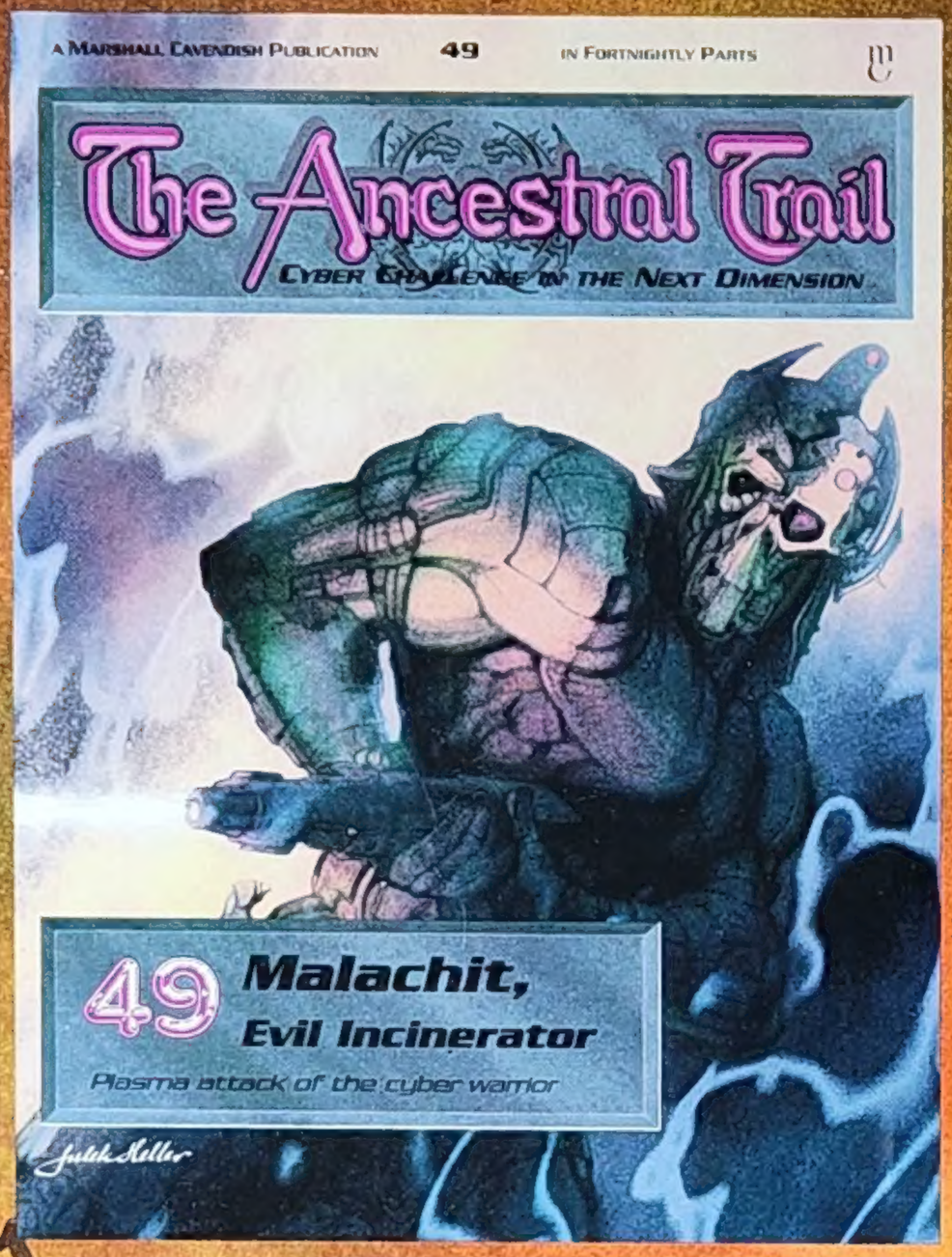

In Issue 49

Malachit,
Evil Incinerator

Richard and Robo are captured by the Dark Robots and taken to a cyber arena. There, Richard is forced to fight for his very existence.

plus

- Another **Techscan** card
- More **Cyber Power** cards
- Playing pieces for your **Cyber Chess** game

Coming in Issue 50

Robo, Robotic Betrayer

Richard finds the last Omni piece and finally completes his quest. Or does he? Before he can return home, there is a traitor to be dealt with.

plus

4 more **Cyber Power** cards ▶ More **Techscan** cards.

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